

VZCZCXRO5076
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHML #1702/01 1440822
ZNR UUUUU ZZ
O 240822Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO RUEC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6642
INFO RUEHXS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE
RHHMUNA/CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANILA 001702

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: /A
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [RP](#)
SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE POICE, MILITARY CONTINUE EFFORTS
AGAINST UNLAWFUL KILLINGS

REF: A. MANILA 855
[B](#). MANILA 777
[C](#). MANILA 458

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary. Police continue to file new cases against suspects in unlawful killings, leading already to several arrests and ongoing prosecutions, in addition to four earlier convictions. The Armed Forces launched two dozen inquiries into alleged involvement by military personnel in some cases. President Arroyo plans soon to sign an Executive Order mandating police/prosecution cooperation in order to improve chances of successful convictions in cases of unlawful murders and other crimes. A European Union delegation in June will examine possibility for future assistance against unlawful killings. Embassy officials continue to highlight both U.S. concern for such crimes as well as our desire to find additional ways to help the Philippines combat this problem. End Summary.

Police investigations

[1](#)2. (SBU) Philippine National Police (PNP) Task Force Usig Commander Geary Barias on May 22 provided an update to Pol/C on efforts to bring to justice those involved in unlawful killings of leftist activists and journalists (ref c). Key accomplishments in recent months regarding 116 killings of leftists and 27 killings of journalists from 2001 to the present have been:

- filing of two more cases related to leftist killings, bringing the total of cases in which police have filed charges to 52, along with 21 cases related to killings of journalists;
- investigations continue on another 64 leftist killings and on five journalist killings;
- two more arrests of suspects in leftist killings, bringing the total to twelve suspects in jail in nine different cases;
- eighteen suspects currently in detention in journalist killings awaiting trial, with another four already convicted, and one suspect released on bail;
- filing of charges in five of the six cases of leftist killings with "military elements" as suspects (with one arrest and one surrendered suspect already), as well as charges in two of five other cases in which suspects were "military assets" (leading to one arrest already); and,
- an additional three police superintendents have been relieved of command (in Misamis Oriental, Iloilo, and Quezon provinces) for suspected involvement in or failure adequately to pursue cases of unlawful killings, in addition to four others relieved of command earlier (in Laguna, Albay, Sorsogon and Kalinga provinces).

[1](#)3. (U) The PNP has now set up its own internal Human Rights Committee, with specific responsibility to investigate cases

in which police are suspects in killings of leftists or journalists. It also provides human rights training. Pol/C and the U.S. Senior Law Enforcement Advisor will meet with its commander during the week of May 28 to determine ways in which the U.S. Embassy might be of assistance.

¶4. (U) Task Force Usig statistics indicate that there have in 2007 so far been four killings of leftist activists and one of a journalist, compared to 39 and 2, respectively, for ¶2006. General Barias said that President Arroyo recently had ordered that the PNP resolve at least 20 more cases before the end of the year, a target that he predicted Task Force Usig would meet or exceed.

Military efforts

¶5. (SBU) In a separate meeting on May 21, Lt. Col. Benedicto M. Jose, Chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) four-month old Human Rights Office (HRO), briefed Pol/C on latest efforts. The HRO has already launched 24 "inquiries" into unlawful killings with alleged involvement of AFP personnel. The current focus is primarily on cases that took place in 2006 or 2007, especially related to unusual concentrations of cases in northern Luzon and Bicol regions. Initial responses from commanders in the field tentatively ruled out complicity by AFP personnel in most cases, and often assigned blame to elements of the New People's Army (NPA) or declared that the deaths took place during military operations against the NPA. In a few cases, the commanders were able to refute that the alleged killings took place at all, citing inaccurate media reporting. Lt. Col. Jose said that he would strengthen the HRO's investigatory cooperation with not only the AFP's Offices of

* Missing Section 002 *
